

Dear Mr. Steen,

1/26/76

You are so kind I must take adequate time for a longer response to your 1/22 that I have. I will be rushing so if anything is ~~infixant~~ unclear please question me. This has been one of those days, the morning taken up by things medical and the afternoon to 3:30 with consultations on what is not going to be a nice piece in a coming issue of Playboy - the first of two on JFK where the writer did not set the doctrine. However, they are paying me for my time, if there is nothing I can do about doctrine. But it has been disagreeable.

Your Penguin friend might want to know that the London Sunday Times' medical correspondent, Oliver Gillie, can give him an immediate impression of the first three parts (from xeroxes prior to some changes in the first two and there were later a few in the third part, where a piece of the appendix appears in the book to replace what was cut). Olivier wanted the Times to go for the ancillary rights and he wanted to do a condensation after reading it. I think he also made other efforts but they keep him busy on time-consuming work. Haven't heard from him in a while.

It is worth a try, I appreciate it, and I know there are no guarantees.

From the Times piece he and I share a number of interests and attitudes, including stimulus from association with young people, many of whom seek me out. (Six were here most of Saturday, college students.) But I envy him the luxury of taking time in writing and editing, the joy of finally coming to the precisely right word. I have to do too much work too fast, with none to edit while I go on to something else. So, I hope that when Post Mortem is read it ~~is~~ is with content and potential in mind, not the existing literary defects. You never believe how rapidly I had to write some of it. Like the second part in two weeks, beginning late on a Sunday night in New Orleans. What an oral history that situation would make! In any event, I had it done and the material fixed in my mind, fully comprehended, by the time it was necessary. No possibility of whetting and honing.

His letters interest me because they conform to my views and actions. When the Peace Corps was launched here and gave every promise of being another futility for the new-emerging countries I launched a project that gave it the first good public attention it received. The papers dubbed it "Geese for Peace." My purpose was to bring the "aid" down to reality, to serve immediate needs immediately and to teach the impractical of out educational institutions that a student from one of those lands could take nothing back if all he learned was how to operate an automated feed mill when there was no commercial livestock feed to be made in those lands and when there were immediate basic food needs. I was farming then. And geese do convert what is otherwise waste into protein. Sargent Shriver took me to all his division chiefs but they were those who had been unable to advance elsewhere and couldn't understand common sense about chickens for those countries. Or inexpensive walking garden tractors rather than enormous machines requiring vast cleared tracts for use and constant use for economy or efficiency. His writing about ~~fascism~~ fascism and for what most adults ignore, what it does to the young, is particularly gratifying because it encourages me to hope that he'll see my intention of not addressing a whodunit and of trying to address a manifestation of growing authoritarianism and the illness of sick and corrupt society that needs cleansing and healing.

I would deceive you if I leave you with the belief it will be possible for me to get back to Tiger to Ride now. I yearn to. But first I must do a new King book, then another, both of which are needed immediately and each of which will require less time than Tiger. Your view is too limited. JFK had decided to change his own policies because he continued those he ~~accepted~~ inherited. This is one of the many reasons I so wish I had foundation support of some kind, especially if it would permit me to work with graduate students, turning some of the other work over to them with them working with me. There is so much more work I have researched and begun to write. And with the lack of remission in the phlebitis it means less working time for me and the need to vary what I do. I can't sit for long, for example. Perhaps I'll learn more about it or there will be some progress. Right now I must write my own letters and mail out my own books, hardly my preference. ...I do appreciate your effort and kindness. Many thanks,